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ABSTRACT

This study examined what school activities parents were involved in and the relationship between parents' interests and level of participation. Parents completed self-report questionnaires examining activities they were currently involved in and activities they would like to do in their children's classrooms. Out of 208 surveys distributed, 114 were returned. Twelve K-3 teachers completed interviews regarding levels of parental involvement in their classrooms. Results were organized by: what parents would like to do and actually do in the classroom; level of parental involvement in the classroom; and level of parental involvement based on the teacher interviews. More than half of parents reported they would like to have lunch with their children, attend field trips, and visit or observe the classroom. More than 10 percent of parents participated in activities they liked doing. Of the 12 teachers, 3 reported having formal, structural involvement in their classrooms, 6 reported having high-level involvement, and 3 reported having low-level involvement. High parent involvement levels related to participation in activities that parents liked to do in the classroom. Findings suggest that by identifying activities parents are interested in, parents are able to be involved in their children's education. However, there is a need for teachers to provide such activities to increase the level of parent involvement. (SM)

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ED 482 552

Running Head: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Parent's Interests, Current Involvement and Level of Parental Involvement in School Activities

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Abstract

The study determined what school activities parents were involved in, and the relationship between parents' interests and their level of participation. Parents were given a self-report questionnaire to identify activities they were currently involved in and to identify activities they would like to do in their children's classroom. Of the 208 parent surveys distributed, 114 were returned. Twelve teachers were interviewed to identify the level of parental involvement in their classroom. Descriptive statistics and correlations were used to examine the parents' response patterns across teachers. The results were organized into: what parents would like to do and actually do in the classroom; the level of parental involvement in each classroom; and the level of parental involvement based on the interview with teachers. More than fifty percent of parents reported they would like to have lunch with their children, attend field trips, and visit or observe the classroom. More than ten percent of parents participated in activities they liked doing. Of twelve teachers participating in the survey, three teachers reported having had formal, structural involvement in their classroom. Six teachers reported having had higher level involvement in their classroom. Three teachers reported having had low level involvement in their classroom. The high level of parental involvement was related to the participation in the activities that parents like to do in the classroom. The findings suggested that by identifying activities parents were interested in, parents will have the opportunity to be involved in their children's education. The findings indicated that there is a need for teachers to provide activities that interest parents so the level of parental involvement will increase in their classroom.

Parent's Interests, Current Involvement and Level of Parental Involvement in School Activities

Three decades of research have shown that children whose parents are involved in their educational process experience greater academic success than children of uninvolved parents (Edwards & Young, 1992; Gramezy, 1985; Hargreaves, 1991; Henderson, 1987; Walberg & Wallace, 1992). Despite the connection between parents' involvement at school and student achievement (Baker & Stevenson, 1986), parental involvement is relatively low (Sheldon, 2002).

Johnson (1991) reported that most parents want to become more involved in their children's education, but many do not know how. Johnson (1991) identified the following characteristics as contributors to lack of parental involvement: 1). feeling of inadequacy, 2). feeling that they are not literate enough and 3). uncertainty of what to do and how to promote learning.

Morgan and Fraser (1992) observed that most parents were concerned about their children's education, but they expressed their concerns at different levels. While examining parental involvement in action in integrated schools in Ireland, they found that there were different levels of parental involvement (low, higher and formal, structural). The following measurements were made to identify the level of parental involvement in each classroom: low level- parents are only concerned with their own children and their progress; higher level- parents take an active part in their children's education; formal, structural level- parents not only take an active role in their children's education, but parents take on leadership positions.

Thus far, studies of parental involvement have not provided a clear understanding of mechanisms that encourage parents to become involved in their children's education. The

purpose of this study was to determined what school activities parents were involved in, and the relationship between parents' interests and their level of participation.. It was hypothesized that parents who select activities which they liked to do were more involved than parents whose activities were dictated by the teacher and school as measured by a self-report questionnaire.

Method

Two hundred eight questionnaires were distributed to twelve teachers in grades (K-3). The teacher sent the questionnaire home with each child to have them filled out by a parent. One hundred fourteen questionnaires were returned.

Twelve teachers were interviewed to identify the level of parental involvement in their classroom. The information was used to put on a scale to determine the level of parental involvement in their classrooms.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations were used to examine the parents' response patterns across twelve teachers. The results were organized into: parents' interests and current involvement among activities (Table I); relationship between parents' interests and current involvement (Table II); relationship between parents' interests and current involvement among twelve teachers (Table III); levels of parental involvement (Table IV); and relationship between interests and current involvement among teachers and levels of parental involvement (Table V).

Parents' Interests and Current Involvement Among Activities

More than fifty percent of parents reported that they would like to have lunch with their children, attend field trips, visit or observe the classroom and come to class parties. More than fifty percent of parents reported that they were currently involved in helping their children with

homework, reading with their children every night, reviewing graded papers with their children, coming to class parties, and attending after school activities.

Relationship between Parents' Interests and Current Involvement

More than ten percent of parents reported that they were interested in and involved in: helping their children with homework, reading with their children, reviewing graded papers, coming to class parties, attending after school activities, attending field trips, visiting or observing their children's class, donating materials, participating in fund raisers, having lunch with their children and communicating with their children's teacher.

Relationship between Parents' Interests and Current Involvement Among Twelve Teachers

In the class of teacher #6, thirteen percent of parents reported that they were interested in and were currently involved in activities they enjoyed. In the class of teacher #4, forty percent of parents reported that they were interested in and currently involved in activities they enjoyed. In the class of teacher #12, sixty percent of parents reported that they were interested in and currently involved in activities they enjoyed.

Level of Parental Involvement

Three teachers reported having had formal, structural involvement in their classroom. Six teachers reported having had higher level involvement in their classroom. Three teachers reported having had low level involvement in their classroom.

Relationship between Interests and Current Involvement Among Teachers and Level of Parental Involvement

In the class of teacher #1, forty-eight percent of parents reported that they were interested in and were currently involved in the activities they liked to do. Because the percentage of involvement was so high, this type of involvement was considered to be formal, structural

involvement. In the class of teacher #5, thirty-one percent of parents reported that they were interested in and were currently involved in the activities they liked to do. Because the percentage of involvement was lower than forty percent, this type of involvement was considered to be higher level involvement. In the class of teacher #6, thirteen percent of parents reported that they were interested in and were currently involved in activities they liked to do. Because the percentage was lower than thirty percent, this type of involvement was considered to be low level involvement.

Conclusion

In this study we have identified school activities that parents would like to do. Parents reported that they would like to: have lunch with their children, attend field trips, visit or observe the classroom, prepare materials for the teacher, help their children with homework, attend after school activities, and write grants. Our findings were consistent with Fruchter, Galletta, and White's (1992) findings which included: helping with homework, joining the PTA, providing merchandise for the bake sale, and attending open house as activities that parents liked to participate in.

We found that parents were more involved when they participated in activities they enjoyed. Teachers should identify activities that lead to increased parental involvement, so that children's educational outcomes will improve and therefore insure greater student achievement. Teachers should provide these activities that parents like to do so the level of parental involvement will increase in their own classroom.

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Table 1

Parents' Interests and Current Involvement Among Activities (number of parents responding = 114)

Activities	Interests		Current Involvement	
	N	%	N	%
Make copies for the teacher	46	40.4	9	7.9
Grade papers	40	35.1	3	2.6
Organize Tuesday folders	32	28.1	5	4.4
Volunteer in the library	26	22.8	8	7.0
Prepare art materials for the teacher	33	28.9	8	7
Share information about hobby or talent	21	18.4	2	1.8
Share information about career	32	28.1	1	.9
Share information about a country lived in or visited	23	20.2	1	.9
Share a particular expertise with the faculty	12	10.5	2	1.8
Share ideas about an art or cooking project	22	19.3	3	2.6
Help plan or present school production	18	15.8	2	1.8
Plan a field trip	25	21.9	1	.9
Learn to use new reading or math program	31	27.2	4	3.5
View and evaluate software	23	20.2	1	9
Learn to use computer programs	29	25.4	14	12
Attend seminars	32	28.1	4	3.5
Tutor a small group	24	21.1	114	0
Read to your child's class	54	47.4	16	14
Give Accelerated Reader tests	31	27.2	12	10.5
Teach other parents to use new programs	22	19.3	3	2.6
Install programs and software on classroom computers	19	16.7	2	1.8
Have lunch with your child	67	58.8	45	39.5
Visit or observe your child's classroom	62	54.4	52	45.6
Attend field trips	65	57	46	40.4

Activities	Interests		Current Involvement	
Come to class parties	58	50.9	61	53.5
Attend after school activities	46	40.4	60	52.6
Complete class projects at home	46	40.4	34	29.8
Prepare materials for the teacher at home	57	50	9	7.9
Help child with homework every night	55	48.2	95	83.3
Read with your child every night	49	43	91	79.8
Review graded papers with child	48	42.1	90	78.9
Communicate with child's teacher using a log	39	34.2	22	19.3
Communicate with child's teacher via e-mail	40	35.1	5	4.4
Contact businesses or organizations with cooperation with the school	27	23.7	9	7.9
Help in organizing and planning ways to recognize and appreciate volunteers	18	15.8	1	9
Help arrange for community leaders to visit the school	21	18.4	3	2.6
Help translate at parent teacher conferences for parents that do not speak English well	9	7.9	2	1.8
Write a grant for the school	10	8.8	2	1.8
Participate in fund raisers	33	28.9	34	29.8
Donate material	38	33.3	35	30.7
Arrange for businesses or other organizations to donate materials	25	21.9	4	3.5

Table 2

Relationship Between Parents' Interests and Current Involvement (N= 114)

Activities	N	%
Make copies for the teacher	2	1.8
Grade papers	1	.9
Organize Tuesday folders	1	.9
Volunteer in the library	3	2.6
Prepare art materials for the teacher	2	1.8
Share information about hobby or talent	0	0
Share information about career	1	.9
Share information about a country lived in or visited	0	0
Share a particular expertise with the faculty	1	.9
Share ideas about an art or cooking project	1	.9
Help plan or present school production	0	0
Plan a field trip	1	.9
Learn to use new reading or math program	0	0
View and evaluate software	0	0
Learn to use computer programs	2	1.8
Attend seminars	2	1.8
Tutor a small group	0	0
Read to your child's class	8	7.0
Give Accelerated Reader tests	2	1.8
Teach other parents to use new programs	0	0
Install programs and software on classroom computers	0	0
Have lunch with your child	19	16.7
Visit or observe your child's classroom	21	18.4
Attend field trips	23	20.2
Come to class parties	31	27.2
Attend after school activities	30	26.3
Complete class projects at home	14	12.3
Prepare materials for the teacher at home	2	1.8

Help child with homework every night	44	38.6
Read with your child every night	39	34.2
Review graded papers with child	37	32.5
Communicate with child's teacher using a log	12	10.5
Communicate with child's teacher via e-mail	1	.9
Contact businesses or organizations with cooperation with the school	3	2.6
Help in organizing and planning ways to recognize and appreciate volunteers	0	0
Help arrange for community leaders to visit the school	0	0
Help translate at parent teacher conferences for parents that do not speak English well	1	.9
Write a grant for the school	1	.9
Participate in fund raisers	16	14.0
Donate material	17	14.9
Arrange for businesses or other organizations to donate materials	0	0

Complete class projects at home	2	0	1	2	3	0	0	2	0	1	1	2
Prepare materials for the teacher at home	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Help child with homework every night	4	4	2	6	3	5	3	4	3	2	2	6
Read with your child every night	4	2	2	6	4	4	3	3	3	1	2	5
Review graded papers with child	3	2	2	6	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	6
Communicate with child's teacher using a log	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
Communicate with child's teacher via e-mail	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact businesses or organizations with cooperation with the school	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Help in organizing and planning ways to recognize and appreciate volunteers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Help arrange for community leaders to visit the school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Help translate at parent teacher conferences for parents that do not speak English well	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Write a grant for the school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Participate in fund raisers	3	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	3
Donate material	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	2
Arrange for businesses or other organizations to donate materials	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL%	48	20	15	40	31	13	34	23	21	14	22	60

Table 4

Levels of Parental Involvement Description

1. Low level involvement- In low level involvement, parents come to the school only when invited. Parents are only concerned with their own children and their progress. Some examples of low level involvement activities are: open house, parent/teacher conferences, responding to letters and discussing disciplinary problems.

2. Higher level involvement- In the higher level involvement, parents take an active part in their children's education. Parents are not only concerned with their children and their progress, but with the school as a whole. Activities at this level may include: becoming members of the Parent Teacher Organization, attending PTO meetings, participating in fund raisers, volunteering in the classroom, volunteering in activities at the school and acting as chaperones on field trips.

3. Formal, Structural involvement- Formal structural involvement is when parents not only take an active role in their children's education, but when parents take on leadership positions. You will find very few parents at this level of involvement. Some activities that parents are involved in at this level may include, acting as room mothers, planning parties, finding funds for the school, serving as PTO officers, and creating new programs for the school.

Table 4

Levels of Parental Involvement

Levels of Involvement	TEACHER											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Low level involvement	✔					✔			✔			
Higher level involvement		✔		✔	✔			✔		✔	✔	
Formal, structural involvement			✔				✔					✔

Based on the definition of low level involvement, teachers #1, #6, and #9 had low level involvement in their classrooms.

Based on the definition of higher level involvement, teachers #2, #4, #5, #8, #10, and #11 had higher level involvement in their classroom.

Based on the definition of formal, structural involvement, teachers #3, #7 and #12 had formal, structural involvement in their classroom.

Table 5

Relationship Between Interests and Current Involvement Among Teachers and Levels of Parental Involvement

Teacher	Percentage of Parents Reporting Activities that They Like to Do	Level of Parental Involvement Based on Teacher Interview
1	48%	formal, structural involvement
2	20%	low level involvement
3	15%	low level involvement
4	40%	higher level involvement
5	31%	higher level involvement
6	13%	low level involvement
7	34%	higher level involvement
8	23%	low level involvement
9	21%	low level involvement
10	14%	low level involvement
11	22%	low level involvement
12	60%	formal, structural involvement

Appendix A

Parent Interests Survey

Directions: I am conducting a survey to help develop better strategies to meet your interests and needs. The first two pages of this survey will let you choose specific activities that you may be interested in doing. Next, you will be asked to provide demographic information.

In the first column place a check next to the activities that you are interested in doing. In the third column place a check next to the activities that you are currently doing. This information may be used to help plan more parental involvement activities to better serve you and your child in the future.

Interests	Activities	Current Involvement
	PREPARE MATERIALS	
	Make copies for the teacher.	
	Grade papers.	
	Organize Tuesday folders.	
	Volunteer in the library.	
	Prepare art materials for the teacher.	
	SHARE INFORMATION	
	Share information about a hobby or talent.	
	Share information about your career.	
	Share information about a country that you lived in or visited.	
	Share a particular expertise with the faculty (such as computers or photography).	
	Share ideas about an art or cooking project.	
	PLANNING	
	Help plan or present a school production.	
	Plan a field trip.	
	LEARN NEW INFORMATION	
	Learn to use a new reading or math program.	
	View and evaluate software.	
	Learn to use new computer programs (such as Accelerated Reader).	
	Attend seminars (on topics such as technology or parenting).	
	HELP WITH INSTRUCTION	
	Tutor a small group.	
	Read to your child's class.	
	Give Accelerated Reader tests.	
	TRAIN OTHERS	
	Teach other parents to use new programs (such as Accelerated Reader or other computer programs).	
	Install programs and software on classroom computers.	
	VISIT	
	Have lunch with your child.	
	Visit or observe your child's classroom.	
	Attend filed trips.	
	Come to class parties.	

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	Attend after school activities (such as PTO meetings, WES Fest, or conferences).	
	WORK AT HOME	
	Complete class projects at home.	
	Prepare materials for teacher at home.	
	Help with my child's homework every night.	
	Read with my child every night.	
	Review graded papers with my child.	
	Communicate with my child's teacher by keeping a log.	
	Communicate with my child's teacher via e-mail.	
	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
	Contact businesses or organizations regarding possible cooperation with the school.	
	Help in organizing and planning ways to recognize and appreciate volunteers.	
	Help arrange for community leaders to visit the school.	
	Help translate at parent-teacher conferences for parents that do not speak English well.	
	FIND RESOURCES	
	Write a grant for the school.	
	Participate in fund raisers.	
	Donate materials.	
	Arrange for a business or other organization to donate materials.	

Parent filling out this survey: ☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Other:_____

Age:

- ☐ 20 to 24 years
- ☐ 25 to 35 years
- ☐ 36 to 44 years
- ☐ 45 to 54 years
- ☐ 55 to 59 years
- ☐ 60 to 64 years
- ☐ 65 or older

Ethnicity:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black non-Hispanic
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ White non-Hispanic

Occupation Area:

- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Service
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Management
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Other

Number of children :_____

Grade of child in this class: _____

Appendix B

Level of Parental Involvement Checklist

Teacher_____

Grade_____

Number of students_____

Parents come to open house and other after school functions.	
Parent(s) come to parent/teacher conferences.	
Parents send supplies and donations to school.	
Parents respond to letters that are sent home.	
Parents call or come to school to discuss disciplinary problems.	
Parents participate in fund raisers.	
Parents are members of the PTO.	
Parents attend PTO meetings.	
Parents volunteer in the classroom.	
Parents participate in activities during school and after school examples: WES Fest, and Field Day and others.	
Parents prepare materials at school or at home (for example art materials, materials for holiday projects and more).	
Parents volunteer to go on field trips.	
Parents act as room mothers.	
Parents plan parties.	
Parents help find and raise funds for the school.	
Parents volunteer in the library.	
Parents serve as ROCKERS.	
Parents serve as PTO officers.	
Parents help with publicity for the school.	
Parents help create new after school programs (for example art, music, tutoring, and others).	
Parents serve as leaders or volunteers in after school programs.	

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